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Opposition march demands 'truth' about Chavez health

CARACAS (AFP) - Hundreds of opposition protesters marched in Caracas on Sunday, chanting "we want the truth" as they called on the government to give more details about the health of cancer-stricken President Hugo Chavez.

Waving Venezuelan flags, the protesters rallied to a street where some 50 university students have staged a

week-long sit-in to demand more transparency about Chavez's condition.

"We want to know what is going with Chavez's health, if he is alive or dead, and we want elections," said Dario Alberici, 55, an public accountant who was blowing on a plastic trumpet in the yellow, red and blue colors of Venezuela.

Continued on pg 6

A spectacular celebration planned for Aruba's National Day, March 18



The Minister with the March 18 organising committee

Aruba's Minister of Economic & Social Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer Winklaar, was joined by members of the National Day planning committee in announcing that three spectacular days of events are planned for this year's observance of Aruba's most important national holiday. March 18 falls on a Monday, allowing for a three-day weekend, and events will take place all weekend long. This year, it has been decided to dub the entire month, "National Month," with various community centers conducting events prior to the actual day, and after.

Homage to "Himno y Bandera" Day, "Anthem & Flag" Day, will begin on Saturday, March 16 with a solemn ceremony at the March 18 Memorial on Irawasquin Boulevard, across from Wilhelmina Park. Here the Prime Minister and dignitaries will honor those who originally signed the petition for Aruban autonomy, and those brave statesmen who founded the movement.

Sunday, March 17 will mark the official opening of the Aruba Linear Park at the Plaza Turismo across from Talk of the Town Resort. The

entire day the plaza will be filled with booths and shows from various groups. Crafts paying homage to Aruba's flag, snacks, and refreshments will be on sale throughout the day.

In the evening, the festivities to move to the traditional location of the Plaza G.F. Betico Croes behind the Cas di Cultura. The annual cultural/patriotic show will be conducted in the band shell, with a particularly spectacular array of the islands most distinguished performers.

On Monday, March 18, the official protocol ceremony,

with placing of memorial wreaths, will take place in the morning, followed by a day filled with activities within the various barrios, conducted by their community centers.

The organizing committee invite all island residents and visitors to join them for these entertaining programs. They also request all groups wishing to conduct celebratory events or participate in those taking place on the March 17. to please contact the Department of Culture to register their events for promotion in the program.

By Rosalie Klein

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Dutch Minister of Defense to visit Aruba and Social Formation Group



Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Dutch Minister of Defense, along with Commander of Military Forces, Tom Middendorp, are expected on the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. During their visit here, they will be given extensive information regarding the Marine Force and Coast Guard for the Caribbean re-

gion.

The working visit will begin in Curacao, where the Minister will hold talks with, among others, Daniel Hodge, Prime Minister of Curacao. At Parera, the Marine base, the Commander of the Naval Forces in the Caribbean region, General Brigada of the Marines, Dick Swijgman,

will inform the Minister of the marines operations in the region and of their operations with respect to the interception of drugs.

At the Marines Camp in Sufficant, Hennis will meet the military team there receiving formation.

The Dutch delegation will later be transported to Aruba aboard the cutter, Panther. Here on Aruba the Minister will meet with Aruba's Governor, Fredis Refunjol and the Prime Minister. This will be followed by a visit to the Marines Camp in Savaneta. In Savaneta, Hennis will talk to the marines of the 32nd infanterie. They will also visit the Coast Guard and the Social Formation Group. The Minister will conclude her visit in Bonaire with a bilateral deliberation with the interim Lieutenant Governor, Wilbert Stolte. The final visit by Hennis and Middendorp will be to the Marechaussee Brigade on the island, who are responsible for customs affairs.

Aruba's Prime Minister met the new Minister last December during a working visit in Holland.

There he learned that Hennis is also a staunch supporter of keeping the Dutch Marines Camp intact on Aruba. He emphasized that the Marines play a vital role in the stability of the Dutch Kingdom as well as for the region. Their interest goes beyond the matter of defense, they also play a vital role in the Social Formation program as well as assists in cases of calamities.

After learning about the success of the first group of young people in the Social Formation Program, Hennis expressed the desire to see the program in action during her visit to Aruba. Hence, one of the items on her agenda will be a visit to the Marines Camp to visit the Social Formation Group.

Aruba's Government approves 2013 Budget

Last Friday, the Council of Ministers approved the 2013 island budget. According to the Minister of Finance, ... "The financial deficit of the 2013 budget is projected to be 223 million Florins - meaning a considerable reduction of 184 million Florins of what was inherited at the end of 2009."

According to the Minister, they were able to reduce the deficit proportionately compared to our GDP of 9.4% in 2010, to 7.1% in 2011, to 5.6 in 2012 and now to 4.5% in 2013.

They project that in 2014 the deficit will reach an international norm of 3% compared to the GDP. They also calculate an economic growth of 3.5% in view of the continual positive developments in tourism and due to the different projects under execution. The island achieved an additional income of 210 million Florins from Valero in 2010. Accord-

ing to the government, the financial deficit for 2013 will be 223 million Florins, which is 50 million Florins less than last year.

The total income for 2013 will be about 1.1 billion Florins, while expenses will run about 1.3 billion Florins. According to the Minister of Finance, they have reduced spending in order to maintain the financial deficit despite that the economic activities were less than what was expected at the beginning of the year.

The law governing the 2013 budget is currently at the Governor's Office and will soon be submitted to the General Advice Council on its normal legislative course, to finally be approved as law. The government has done and is doing their utmost to manage our finances in a responsible, structural and manageable manner, says Minister of Finance, de Mezas.

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Betrano Henriquez recognized for 56 years in music



This past week, Betrano Henriquez was pleasantly surprised by a visit from the Prime Minister of Aruba. The Prime Minister's visit was to present Henriquez with a commemorative plaque in recognition for his 56 years of dedication to music. Henriquez has been involved with music since his 14th year as one of the voices of the Mariachi Perla di Aruba (singing group).

Betrano Henriquez recounted with gusto how he began musically, first with Aguinaldo and later with Ranchera. He said that the... "best Aruban singers came from Savaneta!" Several of his nieces have continued into his footsteps and play various musical instruments.

Henriquez was born on October 30, 1934 in the Yara Barrio where he still lives today. He remembers that Mariachi Perla di Aruba was founded on May 18, 1956, at the home of Supriano van der Linden and that he was their

first singer.

Betrano is more than a singer, he is also a composer. He participated in 5 productions, and has many more compositions that are sung by others. It was suggested that all his compositions be collected and put into a combined format to honor this great singer and musician. During his 56 years of music he sang and played for numerous groups. This he did during his spare time as he was an employee of the Lago refinery.

During his years he received several recognitions as a singer and musician. Betrano is known for being a loving father and family man, loved by his neighbors and Barrio. He was given the recognition of Baluarte of Savaneta by the Prime Minister in the presence of his two children. Bertano Henriquez expressed...

"I am very happy to receive this recognition today while I'm still alive."

Sky Lounge reopens with a sleek new look



Sleek Sky Lounge



New owners Alejandro and Lorena Hernandez

drinks will be bargain priced. Live entertainment is scheduled for every other Friday night and famous island DJ's on the weekends.

For more information for a special party, they can be contacted at 592-5069.

By Rosalie Klein

The Sky Lounge, located in the midst of the Paseo Herencia Shopping Center, has always had a singular ambiance, where the island breeze gently caresses guests. The very charming night spot has been acquired by Alejandro Hernandez and his wife Lorena, who are very enthusiastic about providing a laid back venue, "for the rest of us."

Normally couched in a mellow atmosphere, the joint was jumping for a grand reopening on Friday, March 1, with top local music groups Dushi Band and Oreo, with Claudius Phillips, providing the lively background.

The owners emphasized how ideal the venue is for corporate parties, birthdays, product launching and holiday events where they can easily accommodate groups both large and small in an extremely unique environment. Their plan is to offer great

prices and packages on group events, to exploit this charming lounge fully.

Sky Lounge is open daily from 5:00 PM to 1:00 AM on weekdays, and until 3:00 AM on the weekends. There are regularly scheduled happy hours to relax after work or while away the night, when

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12th Annual AHATA Recycling contest accepting entries now



A Carnival costume made of plastic bags

Organizers of the annual Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) Environmental Committee Recycled Art Expo and Contest recently announced deadlines for registration and submission of artwork.

The exposition will open on Monday, April 15 in the exposition room of the Cas di Cultura in Oranjestad. Submissions will remain on display until Friday, April 26, when winners will be announced and prizes awarded in seven categories. Deadlines to register to participate are April 1 for the individual categories and March 15 for group categories of School/Business/Resort.

The opening of the exposition will take place at 3:00 PM on April 15 and all artwork must be completed and on display prior to the opening event.

Group categories are: Kindergarten, Primary Schools Grades 1-3 and 4-6, Secondary Schools and Group/Company/Resort. Artwork by individuals will be judged under Professional or Amateur divisions.

All work must be created by using recycled materials such as foam, plastics, cardboard boxes, bottle caps, beverage cans and bottles, juice boxes, wood, newspapers and magazines and broken glass or other debris. New materials such as glue and paint to construct and decorate the works of art are allowed.

This year, visiting artist from Venezuela, Jose Brouzzo, who has regularly shown his creations from used cardboard boxes over the last few years, will be conducting classes on recycled art for the duration of the exposition. Organizers express their sincere thanks to the Talk of the Town Resort in Oranjestad, which is sponsoring this special program.

All are invited to visit this most entertaining and enlightening exposition free of charge. It will be open to the public daily from 2:00 to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

To register and for more information, call Vanessa Rasmussen at the AHATA office: 582-2607 or email vanessa@ahata.com.

"Milk Drops" opens at the Aruba National Library



Artist involved in the program



The Connection and nurturing process of breastfeeding



Artwork on display

On Friday evening, March 1, noted island artist Nelson Gonzalez was joined docu-

mentarian Patrick Thompson, Poetess Tuesday Irving and musician/composer

Andre Le Grand in staging the "Milk Drops" Collective Art Exposition at Aruba's National Library on George Madurostraat in Oranjestad.

This was a re-imagining of a similar event in Curacao which dramatically traced the cultural origins and impact of breastfeeding on regional society. There, the artist observed an obvious allegory between the nurturing aspects of the milk of the mother to child as is the milk of Holland to their island territories in the Caribbean. Island women were invited to demonstrate the intimate experience, and the audience was invited to observe and contemplate the importance of this simple, vital act, and its impact on a society.

Patrick recorded the event, which will be integrated into a documentary in progress about traditions and culture of Aruba and Curacao. The demonstration was punctuated by poetry and music, which segued into the official opening of an exposition of photos by Patrick, which have been artistically manipulated by Nelson Gonzalez. The artwork will remain on display in the library's exposition room for two weeks, until March 14. The exposition can be viewed during regular library hours from 7:30 AM until Noon daily; Tuesdays and Thursday from 1:30 to 5:00 PM and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:30 until 8:00 PM.

This collaboration of four unique, creative talents has resulted in a reflective exhibit. Andre's unique, jazzy score is a perfect background for the images. Continuing updates and video of the event can be found on their Facebook page: Milk Drops Collective Art Exhibition.

By Rosalie Klein

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Attention dog & cat owners! Animal Rights Aruba introduces a new Spay & Neuter campaign

Oranjestad -- Animal Rights Aruba now offers greatly discounted Spay & Neuter services at all three vet clinics on the island, so that dog and cat owners can choose between Contreras Veterinary Services, in Shaba and Savaneta, VKA in Noord, Wayaka and San Nicholas or Animal Care Clinic, in Paradera.

Dog & Cat owners are urged to take advantage of

the offer, as Animal Right Aruba subsidizes the procedure by partially paying the vets for the operation. Dog & Cat owners are expected to participate with a very reasonable contribution.

The prices for Spaying & Neutering services may vary a bit between the clinics, but the following is Animal Right Aruba's guideline: For a male dog, owner's contribution is

Awg 50, for a female dog, owner's contribution is Awg 100, and for cats, owner's contribute between Awg 20 to Awg 30.

Animal Rights Aruba spokesperson declares that everyone can now afford to have their pets fixed, improving animal welfare on the island, and reducing the number of unwanted puppies and dogs on the street.

Contreras Veterinary Services NV, Shaba 2, Tel.: 297-587-0917 / 297-587-4467, Savaneta 117 Lokaal 2, 297-584-0918. www.convet-aruba.com, convet@setarnet.aw

Animal Care Clinic, Paradera 177 A, Tel.: 297-582-8382, www.acc-aruba.com, info@acc-aruba.com

Veterinaire Kliniek & Pension, Wayaka 128 O'Stad, also clinics in Noord & San Nicholas, Tel.: 297-582-1720, www.arubavets.com, info@arubavets.com / vwk@setarnet.aw

'Jack' slays N. America box office

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Big-budget action-adventure "Jack the Giant Slayer" crushed all rivals in its debut weekend, easily topping the North American box office, industry estimates showed Sunday.

"Jack," which stars Nicholas Hoult in the title role as a young farmhand battling giants to save a princess, raked in \$28 million in its first three days of release, according to box office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

It easily unseated the comedy "Identity Thief" starring Melissa McCarthy and Jason Bateman, which dropped back to second place with \$9.7 million in box office receipts. So far, "Thief" has taken in \$107.4 million.

Debating in third place was comedy "21 & Over," about a medical student who goes out partying with his buddies for his 21st birthday on the eve of a major med school exam. The film took in \$9 million from Friday to Sunday.

In fourth place was horror sequel "The Last Exorcism Part II," which earned an es-

timated \$8 million in its opening weekend.

Action film "Snitch" starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson dropped from second to fifth place with \$7.7 million, followed by animated kids movie "Escape from Planet Earth," in sixth with \$6.7 million.

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Mainstreet Downtown Aruba

Opposition march demands 'truth' about Chavez health

Continued from pg 1



Opposition students protest demanding to know the real situation of President Hugo Chavez's health, in Caracas

Pro-government protesters held their own rally in support of Chavez in another part of the capital.

Vice President Nicolas Maduro revealed Friday that the leftist leader is undergoing chemotherapy in a Caracas military hospital, but he says Chavez remains in charge.

In power for 14 years, the once omnipresent president has not emerged in public since undergoing cancer surgery in Cuba on December 11.

Chavez was first diagnosed with cancer in the pelvic region in June 2011, but the government has never

disclosed its exact nature, severity or location.

"Nobody knows where he is," said Hector Gonzalez, a 70-year-old engineer. "If he is recovering, they should show him. The country cannot continue in this uncertainty."

"Nobody knows where he is," said Hector Gonzalez, a 70-year-old engineer. "If he is recovering, they should show him. The country cannot continue in this uncertainty."

Others said Venezuela was now under a "de facto" government as Chavez, who was re-elected in October, missed

his January 10 swearing-in ceremony. The Supreme Court backed the inauguration's delay.

"We are in limbo, in a very uncertain, very illegitimate and very unconstitutional situation," Juan Pablo Baquero, 33, a lawyer and university professor.

Obama appoints new Mideast coordinator

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama has appointed a new coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf, the White House announced Saturday.

Philip Gordon, a veteran foreign policy expert, will take up his post on March 11.

The appointment came

two weeks before Obama is set to visit Israel, Ramallah in the occupied Palestinian territories and Jordan.

National Security Adviser Tom Donilon praised Gordon as a "key member" of Obama's foreign policy team who was the "perfect person" to coordinate US policy.

"His work on international security, international economics and European and Middle Eastern Affairs make him the perfect person to coordinate our policy in this time of great challenge and opportunity in the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf," Donilon said in a statement.

Gordon has served as assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs since May 2009, with responsibility for US policy in 50 countries, as well as NATO, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

China to seal Xi's power after months of pledges

BEIJING (AFP) - Thousands of delegates from across China meet this week to seal a power transfer to new leaders who have raised expectations with a deluge of propaganda during their first months running the Communist Party.

Xi Jinping is due to replace Hu Jintao as China's president at the annual National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, a rubber-stamp parliament which meets on Tuesday. Li Ke-qiang will become premier, replacing Wen Jiabao.

It is the final step in a generational handover, four months after they took charge of the ruling party with pledges of cleaner government and greater devotion to people's livelihoods -- themes echoed across state-run media.

Xi's official appointment as president will end months of uncertainty following his appointment as Communist Party leader in November, said Jean Piere Cabestan, politics professor at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Xi's position in the Communist Party is his real source of power, but his forthcoming government title will give him a more visible role, including on state trips abroad. Nearly 3,000 delegates gather Tuesday for around 10 days to pass measures pre-approved by party leaders, including a reorganisation of government bureaucracy that will see major ministerial mergers.

British queen in hospital with gastroenteritis: palace

LONDON (AFP) - Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, suffering from gastroenteritis, was admitted to hospital on Sunday, a Buckingham Palace spokesman told AFP.

All the 86-year-old's engagements for this week, including a visit to Rome, have been called off, the spokesman added.

"The Queen is being assessed at King Edward VII's Hospital in London after experiencing symptoms of gas-

troenteritis. As a precaution, all official engagements this week will be either postponed or cancelled," he said.

Britain's head of state is known for her robust health and devotion to duty, and rarely misses engagements.

The monarch celebrated her diamond jubilee in 2012, marking her 60 years on the throne. This year further ceremonies will be held to mark the six decades since her coronation in 1953.



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International News

Earth Hour says campaign spreads to 50 countries



SINGAPORE (AFP) - A campaign by global environmental movement Earth Hour to get promises of action from individuals and organisations has spread to at least 50 countries, its chief executive said.

Andy Ridley said the "I Will If You Will" campaign, launched in 2012 in 13 countries, is expected to expand its geographic reach almost four-fold this year, strengthening the group's impact beyond an annual lights-out event.

"It worked. So this year, instead of 13, it will be at least 50, we already have at least 50 countries confirmed."

Last year the campaign spurred a 120,000-strong petition in Russia that galvanised parliament to pass a law protecting the seas from oil pollution.

Former Botswana president Festus Mogae also pledged to

plant one million indigenous trees in four years.

The countries involved last year included Singapore, Sweden, Hong Kong and the United States. This year's participating countries include Australia, Britain and South Korea, with celebrities expected to make pledges.

Singapore-based Earth Hour's headline campaign is an annual lights-out activity to underscore energy conservation. It was observed in 7,000 cities and towns in 152 countries and territories last year, the group said.

This year's Earth Hour is scheduled for March 23 at 8:30 pm in participating locations.

Ridley, speaking at the global launch of Earth Hour 2013, said the Asia-Pacific region gives the movement its strongest support.

Rio police occupy slum



RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Brazilian BOPE police elite unit personnel and marines patrol during an operation at Caju shantytown in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, early morning Sunday. Brazilian police on Sunday occupied crime-infested slums near Rio de Janeiro's international airport and seaport as part of efforts to drive out drug traffickers ahead of the 2014 World Cup. The operation, involved more than 1,300 police and members of the military backed by mechanized units of the Brazilian navy, which entered the favelas of Caju and Barreira do Vasco and seized control of their narrow streets.

ATENCION

CAP Compania Arubano di Petroleo N.V. ta informa publico en general cu e compania REPSOL lo haci un investigacion di exploracion sismico den lama rond di Aruba.

- E exploracion sismico aki ta tuma luga den cumplimiento di un contract entre REPSOL y CAP a base di articulo 3 y 4 di e "Petroleumverordening zeegebied Aruba".
- E investigacion sismico lo cuminsa dia 15 di februari 2013 y lo dura mas of menos 40 dia.
- E barco sismico SR/V VANTAGE lo rastra un kabel cu un largura di 6 kilometer pa 9 kilometer y un diameter di 6 centimeter na un profundidad di 8 meter pa 10 meter bao di awa.
- Dos otro barco di apoyo OMS RESOLUTION y ELIZABETH-C lo duna sosten logistico na e operacionnan di e investigacion y lo mantene comunicacion cu barconan den e area.
- Tur actividad lo ta na un distancia di mas di 3 kilometer for di costa.
- CAP N.V. ta haci un peticion na tur doño di barco pa coopera pa e investigacion por tuma lugar na un forma sigur y adecuado.

CAP Compania Arubano di Petroleo N.V. brings to the attention of the public in general that the company REPSOL will be conducting a seismic exploration survey offshore Aruba.

- This seismic survey is conducted in fulfillment of a contract between REPSOL and CAP in accordance with articles 3 and 4 of the Petroleum Ordinance offshore Aruba.
- The seismic survey will start the 15th of February 2013 and will have a duration of 40 days approximately.
- The seismic vessel SR/V VANTAGE will tow a submarine cable of 6 – 9 kilometers with a diameter of 6 centimeter at a depth of 8 - 10 meters below sealevel.
- Two support vessels OMS RESOLUTION and ELIZABETH-C will give logistical assistance to the operations during the seismic survey and will maintain communications with other ships in the area.
- All seismic acquisition will be conducted at a distance of more than 3 kilometer from the coast.
- CAP N.V. requests the co-operation of boat owners in order to ensure that the survey is conducted in a safe and proper manner.



Assad refuses to quit as foes advance in north Syria

DAMASCUS (AFP) - President Bashar al-Assad insisted he will not step down and blasted Britain's support for his armed foes who reportedly killed dozens of soldiers on Sunday in attacks on a police academy in northern Syria.

"We are ready to negotiate with anyone, including militants who surrender their arms," Assad told Britain's Sunday Times newspaper, in a rare interview conducted last week at his Al-Muhajireen palace in Damascus.

"We can engage in dialogue with the opposition, but we cannot engage in dialogue with terrorists," he said in the videotaped interview.

His offer of talks was aired as UN chief Ban Ki-moon and his Syria envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said they were prepared to broker peace talks between the Assad regime and the opposition.

A joint statement by the pair said the UN would "be prepared to facilitate a dialogue between a strong and representative delegation from the opposition and a credible and empowered delegation from the Syrian government".

The offer came after both sides in Syria had indicated a "willingness to engage in dialogue", the UN said.

In Iran, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said that Assad, a close ally of Tehran, would contest a presidential election next year and it was up to the Syrian people to choose their own leader.

Syria is locked in a two-year-old conflict in which the United Nations estimates more than 70,000 have been killed. But Assad rejected the idea of standing down to end the bloodshed.

-- Police academy, prison attacks --

On the ground in the mainly opposition-held north, rebels killed more than 34 government forces in an attack on a police academy in Aleppo province and seized large parts of the facility, a monitoring group said.

They "seized control at dawn of large parts of the police academy" in Khan al-Assal, after eight days of fierce fighting for one of the regime's last bastions in the west of Aleppo province, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

It also reported that Jihadist fighters seized control of a prison in Raqa province and freed "hundreds" of detainees on Saturday night.

A total of 182 people were killed in violence across Syria on Saturday, including 83 rebels and two Palestinians hanged at the Yarmuk refugee camp in Damascus on suspicion of aiding the regime, it said in an updated toll.

Health & Living

Elderly woman dies as result of Nurse refusal to CPR on patient

-- News reports today that a nurse at Glenwood Gardens, a senior living facility in Bakersfield, California, refused to perform CPR on an elderly woman earlier this week. Just to set the record straight, the patient did not have a do-not-resuscitate order.

Dispatcher Tracy Halvorson begged the woman on the phone to start CPR on the eighty-seven year old.

The nurse shared with the dispatcher that she refused to give the woman CPR because it was against the facility's policy for staff to do so.

Once the dispatcher realized that she was not getting anywhere with the nurse, she asked her to find someone who would be willing to help. Halvorson stated that she would talk someone through performing CPR.

The ambulance arrived a few minutes later but unfortunately Lorraine did not survive. She was later pronounced dead at Mercy Hospital Southwest.

The facility's executive director, Jeffrey Toomer, sent a statement on behalf of Glenwood Gardens to KGET, the NBC affiliate in Bakersfield. "In the event of a health emergency at this independent living community our practice is to immediately call emergency medical personnel for assistance and to wait with the individual needing attention until such personnel arrives," the statement said, according to the station.

The statement also said a "thorough internal review of the matter" would be conducted.

Some facts about : Menopause

-- Menopause represents the end of menstruation. While technically it refers to the final menstrual period, it is not an abrupt event, but a gradual process. (Many women have irregular periods and other problems of perimenopause for years. It is not easy to predict when menopause begins, although doctors agree it is complete when a woman has not had a period for a full year.)

Causes & symptoms:

Once a woman enters puberty, each month her body releases one of the more than 400,000 eggs that are stored in her ovaries, and the lining of the womb (uterus) thickens in anticipation of receiving a fertilized egg. If the egg is not fertilized, progesterone levels drop and the uterine lining sheds and bleeds.

By the time a woman reaches her late 30s or 40s, her ovaries begin to produce less estrogen and progesterone and release eggs less often. The gradual decline of estrogen causes a wide variety of changes in tissues that respond to estrogen—including the vagina, vulva, uterus, bladder, urethra, breasts, bones, heart, blood vessels, brain, skin, hair, and mucous membranes. Over the long term, the lack of estrogen can make a woman more vulnerable to osteoporosis (which can begin in the 40s) and heart disease.

As the levels of hormones fluctuate, the menstrual cycle begins to change. Some women may have longer periods with heavy flow followed by shorter cycles and very little bleeding. Others will begin to miss periods completely.



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Norway mulls decriminalising heroin smoking



OSLO (AFP) - The Norwegian government said Friday it wants to decriminalise the inhalation of heroin, a method considered less dangerous than injecting it, to reduce the number of overdoses in the country.

The move would make smoking heroin an offense on par with injecting it, which is illegal in Norway but tolerated.

Oslo's municipality already operates a site where heroin addicts can inject drugs under safer, more hygienic circumstances than they would have had access to otherwise.

"The number of fatal overdoses is too high and I would say it's shameful for Norway," Health Minister Jonas Gahr Støre told daily Dagsavisen.

"The way addicts consume their drugs is central to the question of overdoses. My view is that we should allow people to smoke heroin since injecting it is more danger-

ous," he said.

Norway has one of Europe's highest death rates among drug addicts, with 30 percent of 262 fatal overdoses in 2011 coming from heroin, according to the Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research, Sirus.

By comparison, 168 people died on Norwegian roads in the same year.

Støre spoke six days before the presentation of a government plan for fighting drug addiction, and claimed to have the backing of a majority of the centre-left coalition.

"This isn't about some kind of legalisation of heroin but about being realistic," he said.

"Those who are in the unfortunate situation of injecting themselves in a (municipality) drug room should... be able to inhale. It is less dangerous, you consume less and the risk of contracting a disease is lower," he added.

"It's a paradox that you can't smoke heroin when you can inject it, since the first method is less dangerous than the second," Sirus researcher Astrid Skretting said.

"But the culture of injecting (which provides a more immediate effect than smoking) seems deeply rooted in Norway and it's not certain that a decriminalisation will lead to a radical change in behaviour," she added.

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Sci-Tech

SpaceX's capsule arrives at ISS



-- SPACE, ISS : This NASA image from video shows the SpaceX capsule Dragon being captured by the Canada Arm on board the International Space Station (ISS) yesterday. The privately-owned unmanned US space capsule owned by SpaceX arrived at the International Space Station on Sunday, bringing to the space outpost food, scientific materials and other crucial equipment. The capsule named Dragon was captured -- with the help of a robotic arm -- by NASA Expedition 34 Commander Kevin Ford and Flight Engineer Tom Marshburn, 5:31 am EST (1031 GMT), when the ISS was over northern Ukraine, US space officials said.

The US space agency said a hatch between Dragon and the ISS's Harmony module would be opened today as the capsule commenced its three-week-

long stay at the orbiting space station.

The craft, after being inspected via cameras, was brought to the Earth-facing port of the Harmony module and bolted into place by commands from mission control.

The original plan had been for Dragon to attach to the space station on Saturday, but the capsule ran into troubles with its thrusters shortly after Friday's launch from Cape Canaveral, Florida, triggering the delay.

SpaceX engineers found that only one of the spacecraft's four thruster pods, which help maneuver the capsule in orbit, was working, but the malfunction was fixed.

The snafu has not delayed the capsule's splashdown, which remains scheduled for March 25, NASA said.

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World's top tech fair pins hopes on Asia, social media

BERLIN (AFP) - The world's biggest high-tech fair, the CeBIT, kicks off Tuesday, pinning its hopes on growing tech regions Asia and Africa and the hot topic of social media to beat competition from other high-profile fairs.

More than 4,000 exhibitors from some 70 countries are expected to set up shop in the northern German city of Hanover, about the same number as last year despite the weak economic environment, organisers said.

However, even with stable exhibitor numbers, the CeBIT is a far cry from its glory days at the height of the dot-com boom, when 8,000 firms would scrap for places in the hanger-like halls of the sprawling fair grounds.

CeBIT is battling competition from the swanky Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas and the just-finished Mobile World Congress



A staff member checks a display that demonstrates cloud computing with mobile phones at the CeBit computer fair.

in Barcelona but Sass insisted that Hanover was still top of the tree.

CeBIT is also the only fair catering to the whole IT sector rather than a specific part, he added, announcing that tech giants like IBM, Microsoft, SAP and Google would be present at this year's event.

The IT industry enters the CeBIT in relatively bullish

mood, with German industry group BITKOM forecasting in the run-up to the fair that global tech spending was poised to rise by 5.1 percent to 2.7 trillion euros (\$3.5 trillion) this year.

This year's CeBIT theme is "shareconomy", the increasing trend of users sharing data and things, with examples being "carsharing" and of course so-

cial media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Several exhibits will be devoted to shifting the way office communications are run, moving from email -- which some experts see as increasingly obsolete -- to internal social media platforms.

Innovative ways to process vast amounts of data as well as the perennial issues of cloud computing -- storing data remotely -- and Internet security will also be major topics at this year's event.

But as ever with the CeBIT, it is not all work and no play as there will be the usual display of head-spinning gadgets and pointless but fun applications to entertain the punters.

For those who despair of finding the right items in massive supermarkets, a firm has developed a trolley that communicates with the shelves, points the hapless shopper in the right direction and ticks things off the list.

And for the strains of daily life, a communications firm has created an app that gives you a read-out on your stress levels just from testing your voice.

Another firm has pioneered the must-have piece of furniture for those accused of being couch potatoes.

The chair measures weight, heart rate, blood pressure and other important health data and, if it doesn't like what it sees, transforms into a rowing machine so you can shift a few pounds while you watch your favourite programme.

While the fair officially throws open its doors on Tuesday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel will give the opening speech the night before along with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

Poland is this year's "partner country", with around 150 Polish exhibitors expected to make the trip over the border.

COMICS



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1. One against
5. Glutton
8. Curse
12. Cargo
13. Expert aviator
14. Vocalized
15. To be (Fr.)
16. Stages a Civil War battle
18. Actor Connery
19. "Smallville" damsel
20. Laughter syllable
21. Like high schoolers
24. Shoots a movie again
27. Top
31. Earthenware jar
32. Be of value to
33. ___ code
34. Inorganic substance
36. Tales
39. Launching ___ (NASA need)
42. London farewell (2 wds.)
43. Unhearing
47. Beatles song (3 wds.)
49. Toga
50. Wicked emperor
51. Golf teacher
52. "___ upon a time..."
53. Flat-bottomed

boats

54. Compass pt.
55. Furtive whisper

DOWN

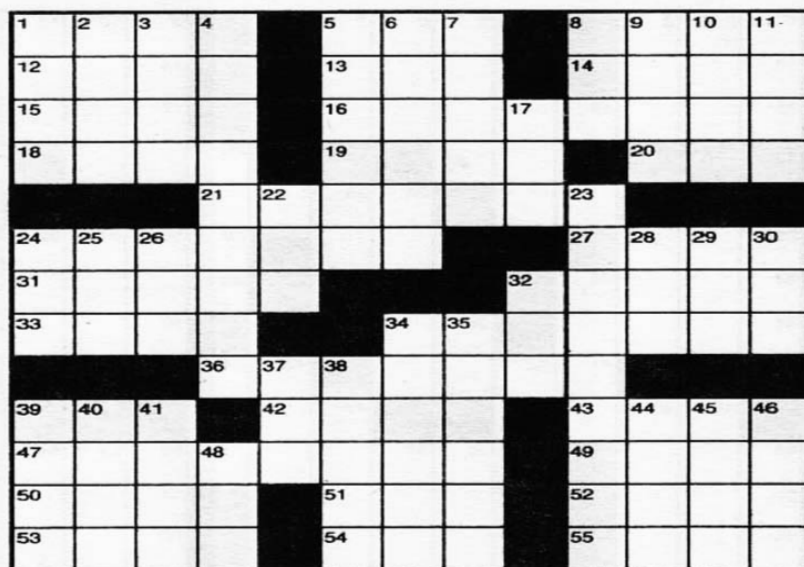
1. Tankard fillers
2. Promissory
3. Scarlett's estate
4. Exactly alike
5. "The Cotton Club" locale
6. Pacific and Indian
7. Davis of "Hero"
8. Feather scarf
9. Curved passage
10. Jean who

makes bath products

11. Besides
17. Old horse
22. BPOE member
23. Listen in secretly
24. Magnavox rival
25. Make a boo-boo
26. Opponent
28. Auto
29. Farrow or Hamm
30. Building wing
32. Besides
34. Curbside devices
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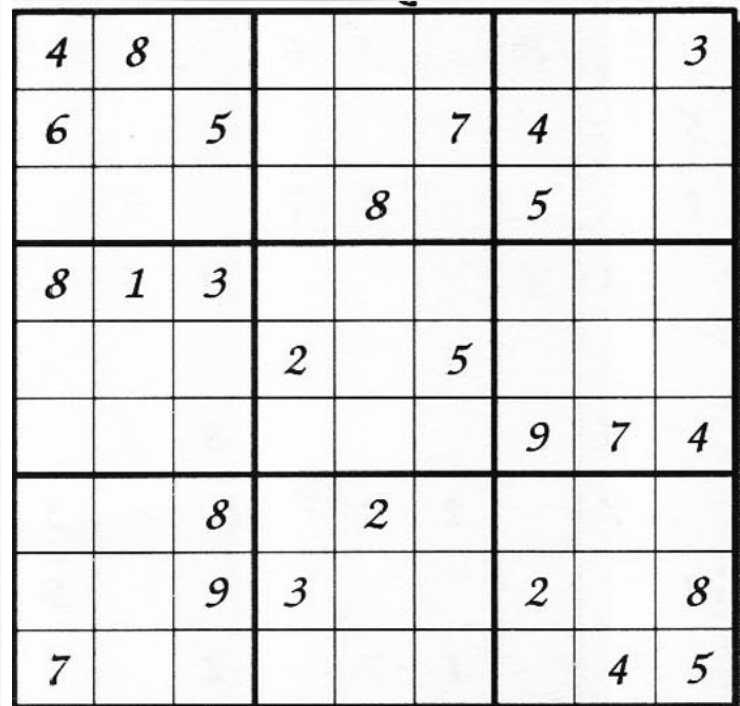
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4	6	5	7	3	8	9	1	2
7	3	8	9	1	2	4	6	5
2	5	9	6	7	4	1	8	3
9	1	5	2	8	7	3	6	4
6	8	7	4	1	5	2	9	3
5	2	4	9	3	6	1	8	7

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.



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Obama orders \$85 billion spending cuts, blames Republicans

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama has reluctantly ordered an \$85 billion austerity drive that could slow the US economy and slash jobs, after blaming Republicans for refusing to stop the "dumb" spending cuts.

Obama complied with his legal obligations and initiated the automatic, across-the-board cuts in domestic and defense spending Friday, following the failure of efforts to clinch a deal with Republicans on cutting the deficit.

The measures could mean long lines at US border posts, reduced military readiness, cuts to special needs education programs, and will trim the resources of some emergency services, according to White House officials.

Obama had earlier blamed the austerity time bomb on Republicans, who refused to close tax loopholes for the rich and corporations combined with more targeted spending cuts, in his "balanced" approach to deficit reduction.

Only three months after winning re-election, and with the extent of his authority in Washington again constrained, Obama bemoaned his inability to do a "Jedi mind-meld" to get Republicans to change their minds, using imagery from Star Wars and Star Trek.

Obama was bound by law to initiate the automatic, indiscriminate cuts, which could wound the already fragile econ-

omy, cost a million jobs and harm military readiness.

Both sides agree that the sequester is a blunt instrument to cut spending, as it does not distinguish between essential and wasteful programs -- in what Obama has branded a "meat-cleaver" approach.

New Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel warned that the sequester could endanger the military's capacity to conduct its missions.

The president appeared irritated but combative as he spoke to reporters after meeting with his chief foes -- House Speaker John Boehner and Senate Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell -- and allies Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and top House Democrat Nancy Pelosi in the Oval Office.

Boehner emerged from the talks to signal to reporters that Republicans would not budge on Obama's key demand for a deal that would raise tax revenues.

Even Obama's defeated election rival Mitt Romney got in on the action, slamming the president in a rare interview, complaining he was "blaming and pointing" at Republicans and not leading the country.

In the report to government agencies, the OMB said non-exempt defense programs would be cut by 13 percent this year and domestic programs would be sliced by nine percent.

In cash terms, reductions for the military amount to just over \$42 billion, with a similar sum coming from non-defense related spending.

The next point of leverage is likely a bill to fund government operations, which Congress must pass by March 27, or see the government shut down.

Both sides indicated that they would seek to avoid that scenario, meaning that the sequester cuts may remain in place -- unless a way can be found to make equal spending reductions that are less punitive.

Finance

Repsol sells Shell LNG assets for \$6.65 bn

MADRID (AFP) - Spanish energy group Repsol said last week it had sold its liquefied natural gas (LNG) assets to Shell for \$6.65 billion (5.1 billion euros) in cash and debt.

"The agreement, which generates a \$3.5 billion pre-tax capital gain for Repsol, includes the assets in Trinidad & Tobago (Atlantic LNG), Peru LNG and Bahia de Bizkaia Electricidad (BBE) as well as the LNG sale contracts and time charters," the company said in a statement.

Repsol said it is keeping its LNG assets in Canada, and signed a supply agreement with Shell, as the current low gas prices in North America would not allow it to earn a return on the Canaport regasification terminal.

Repsol said the transaction, which it expects to close before the end of the year, will mean that it surpasses the 4.5 billion euros in divestments outlined in the 2012-2016 strategic plan.

Oman aims to hike oil output in 2013

MUSCAT (AFP) - A top Omani oil official said Sunday the sultanate aims to increase oil production to 939,500 barrels per day this year and also raise gas output.

The sultanate "will increase its daily production of oil to 939,500 barrels per day, and gas to 107 million cubic metres (3.8 trillion cubic feet), thanks to enhanced extraction of oil and the development of several fields," said oil ministry undersecretary Nasser al-Jishmi.

He said average daily production of oil and condensates rose 4 percent last year percent to reach 918,500 bpd.

Average daily gas production increased in 2012 by 3.3 percent to 98.2 million cubic metres, including 80.9 million cubic metres of non-associate gas, Jishmi told reporters.

"The sultanate's reserves of oil and condensates amounted to around 4,630 million barrels, in addition to 18 trillion cubic feet of gas," said Jishmi, whose country's energy resources are modest compared to its neighbours in the Gulf.

"The deal strengthens the company's balance sheet and financial position, advancing the goal of reinforcing its credit ratings, and reduces Repsol's net debt by more than half to 2.2 billion euros, excluding Gas Natural Fenosa," added the company.

It said the funds obtained from the will allow it to boost its upstream organic growth strategy and build upon its exploratory successes.

EU economy commissioner warns over Cyprus euro exit

BERLIN (AFP) - European Economic Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn has warned that debt-riven Cyprus could exit the eurozone without a bailout in an interview with a German news weekly published Sunday.

"Even if you come from a big EU country, you should be aware that every euro member is systemically relevant," Rehn told Spiegel magazine when asked why Cyprus needed a rescue programme.

"If Cyprus became bankrupt in a disorderly way, the result would be almost certainly an exit from the eurozone," he said in the edition due to hit newsstands Monday.

He added that a pledge by the members of the single currency to preserve the euro's unity had calmed the financial markets. "We should not endanger this success," he warned.

New Cypriot President

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SATURDAY'S Crossword Answer



- MONTESSON (AFP) - Mushroom grower Angel Moili, 52, poses among his cultures on February 27, 2013 in Montesson, outside Paris. Mushroom growers are only a handful left in a market that has become more competitive : a few kilometers away from the capital, the last producers of button mushrooms still resist, wanting their production to remain a regional specialty.

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Japan cosmetics giant Shiseido ditches animal testing

TOKYO (AFP) - Japan's Shiseido said it was mostly dropping animal-tested cosmetics, as the European Union gets set to finalise a sweeping ban on the sale of such products later this month.

But the company said exceptions to the policy meant it would still allow animal testing when that was the only way of proving the safety of products already being sold in the market, and in some countries where animal testing is legally required.

The policy, which starts from April, applies to all of the Tokyo-based cosmetic giant's production sites, including those run by suppliers, it said.

Activists have for years pressured cosmetic firms and other companies that use animal testing to find alternatives to the practice, which they say is cruel and unnecessary.

Shiseido said it could ensure the safety of its products through other means, including using data from past experiments, human volunteers and other kinds of testing.

US-Mexico border an obstacle to immigration reform



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Immigration reform is one of President Barack Obama's priorities for his second term, and for a wide-reaching package to pass, lawmakers need to be convinced that the border with Mexico is secure.

But that is no easy sell.

Apprehensions of undocumented aliens at the frontier have dropped 50 percent since 2008, going to 365,000 people last year, which the Obama administration cites as evidence that border security measures work.

And deportations of aliens without residency permits, particularly those with criminal records -- a key government goal -- stand at about 400,000 a year.

But the investigative arm of Congress, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), dampened the government's optimism last week.

A report submitted to the House of Representatives said the number of apprehensions

at the US-Mexico border "provides some useful information but does not position the department to be able to report on how effective its efforts are at securing the border."

"The Border Patrol is in the process of developing goals and measures; however, it has not yet set target timeframes and milestones for completing its efforts," it added.

Marc Rosenblum, an immigration policy expert with the Congressional Research Service, said that "the size and diversity of the US border mean that no single, quantitative, off-the-shelf indicator accurately and reliably provides a metric or a 'score' for border enforcement."

Another report found that southern US cities, in particular El Paso, Texas just across the border from drug violence-plagued Ciudad Juarez, are the safest in the country, with constantly

dropping rates of all kinds of crime. That study was based on FBI figures.

So far, the Republicans, who control the House, have been adamant that they will not approve major immigration reform until they are convinced the border is secure.

US authorities estimate

there are 11.5 million illegal aliens in the United States, most of them Mexican and Central American, though the flow from Mexico has practically dried up.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano says a 100 percent secure border is impossible, and now she has to deal with her slice of the so-called sequester, or deep cuts in public spending.

It means her funding will be slashed by an amount equivalent to the salaries of 5,000 border agents.

The border between the United States and Mexico is the busiest in the world, with 350 million people crossing it every year.

Figures on border activity have always been problematic because they only take into account apprehensions and people caught more than once trying to sneak in, not those who do make it across into the US, or the effect of factors such as like tunnels.

Three years ago the Department of Homeland Security announced it would use a new measuring tool, called operational control of the border, with five levels of effectiveness.

When the agency acknowledged that it had top- and second-level control of only 57 percent of the more than 3,000 miles (4,800 kilometers) that make up the border with Mexico, Republicans expressed outrage.

The department dumped that tool the next year, and for now it uses figures on apprehensions of illegals.

The GAO report said Homeland Security has pledged to present new goals and timeframes in November of this year -- a target that hardly suits the White House's stated goal of getting reform passed in a matter of months.

One idea being debated is to create an independent commission that will determine when it thinks the border is secure.

Advocates of immigration reform that the debate could really go on forever.

"You're never going to seal that border," Napolitano said in a speech last week.

But another key factor in the debate is this: around 40 percent of the illegal aliens in the country probably entered the United States legally, with a visa that has since expired, according to Homeland Security figures.

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Spend a fun evening with friends at Barney's



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--A few months ago, Palm Beach welcomed a cozy new place that offers good food, great prices and a uniquely warm, welcoming ambiance that makes patrons feel as if they are visiting with friends rather than just eating out. Even the name, "Barney's", which was inspired by Barney Rubble

of the Flintstones, is an expression of the good humor of its owners and your hosts, Ron and Elina.

Ron and Elina have a very congenial division of labor; he enjoys being bartender and playing around with his "cocktail of the day" while she sees to it that everyone is well satis-

fied with their meal. Chef Jan is in the kitchen doing his magic; patrons praise their spicy Firecracker Shrimp appetizer and mushrooms stuffed with escargot, priced at \$9.50 and \$8.50, or the Smoked Trout Fillet for a real gourmet treat.

They are particularly popular for their "Build Your Own

Barney Burger" using specially imported organic beef from Holland, guaranteed to have been raised without steroids or antibiotics, only \$9.50 with fries and coleslaw. Patrons are handed a special hamburger checklist, which features a full menu of toppings, sauces and cheeses to customize your order to create the ideal burger. One can also opt for a second or third hamburger patty for a very nominal cost.

High end items on the menu, such as the Seafood Pasta, are only \$20.50. They also have a kid's menu with favorites such as a Kid's Burger, chicken fingers and Mac & Cheese; most items are only \$4. One regular described the place as particularly "kid-friendly," with Elina, a mother herself, having devised a number of methods to keep young ones entertained. The menu has a range to please patrons who are in the mood for something simple while other can be indulgent gourmands.

Tuesday through Saturday

evenings they have specialty nights at bargain rates. Tuesday is Schnitzel Night, with a choice of chicken or pork schnitzel prepared any of five ways, a platter with salad and side dish is \$17.50. Wednesday is "All you can eat grouper, prepared any of five ways, with veggies and side dish, \$19.50. Thursday they do it again with unlimited ribs done three ways for \$17.50 with salad, slaw and fries, Saturday means endless rib eye steak with salad and fries for \$19.50. Friday evening ends the work week with Karaoke Night, a convivial and fun evening when islanders kick back and let loose their inner rock star.

Barney's is located just next to the huge supermarket on the Palm Beach/Noord road, not far from the gas station. **They are open from 5:00 to 11:00 PM and closed on Mondays. Check out their full menu at <http://www.barneysaruba.com> or call 586-5420 for reservations and directions.**

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their "home away from home" in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches



and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of

Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great

demand for Aruba and facilities such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the residences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the least is the future value of the

investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

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Sport

Tennis: Djokovic wins fourth Dubai Open



DUBAI (AFP) - Novak Djokovic won his fifth title in six tournaments and extended an unbeaten run to 18 matches as he clinched a fourth Dubai Open title with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Tomas Berdych on Saturday.

The world number one from Serbia underlined his pre-eminence in the world game with an athletically aggressive performance against the world number six from the Czech Republic, who knocked out Roger Federer, the titleholder,

in the semi-finals.

These moments suggested that the biggest difference between the two men is a mental one, something indicated again near the end when Djokovic coped with a time violation warning from the umpire as he was serving for the match.

Djokovic was clearly delighted to triumph in his first tournament since successfully defending the Australian Open title five weeks ago.



ANTARCTICA - A runner looks at a penguin as he takes part in the Antarctic Marathon, held for the first time in the frozen continent, on March 1, 2013. Fifty-two competitors from different countries took part in the race.

Football: Atletico miss chance to close gap on Barca

MADRID (AFP) - Atletico Madrid missed the chance to close the gap on Barcelona at the top of La Liga to nine points as they had to settle for a point from a disappointing 0-0 draw at Malaga.

The visitors started brightly with Diego Costa, Arda Turan and Cristiano Rodriguez all having efforts at goal, but it was Thibaut Courtois who was forced into the first serious save of the game as he diverted Martin Demichelis' header wide.

And despite Atleti's dominance in possession after the break it was again Malaga who came closest to scoring as Weligton headed inches past Courtois' far post from Victorino Artunes' free-kick.

The point does help both sides European ambitions though as Atletico open up a two-point gap over Real Madrid in third and Malaga

move a point ahead of Valencia in the fight for the final Champions League place in fourth.

This fixture also finished 0-0 in Diego Simeone's first game in charge of Atletico just over a year ago but there was no indication of another stalemate after an end-to-end opening 20 minutes.

Costa shanked horribly wide when he should have hit the target before Arda sent another effort fizzing just past Willy Caballero's right-hand post.

Courtois was forced into his first save of the game moments later, but Lucas Piazon's header lacked the necessary power to seriously trouble the Belgian.

Arda then tested Caballero with another drive from distance and Rodriguez also dragged a shot just off target as Atleti continued to press but

they were grateful to Courtois just to keep the scores level on 18 minutes as he somehow turned Demichelis' downward header behind.

Thereafter though the game lacked rhythm and excitement as both sides cancelled each other out.

One of the few players who did look like creating something was Costa, but after he was rightly booked for diving to try and win a penalty on the hour mark he was replaced by Simeone for fear of picking up a second yellow card.

The best effort of the second period arrived 13 minutes from time as Weligton headed Antunes' free-kick just past under pressure from a posse of Atleti defenders before Caballero had one more routine save to make from Mario Suarez to ensure the spoils were shared.

LeBron James mulls offer to participate in the NBA's dunk contest



-- LeBron James apparently is still mulling Magic Johnson's \$1 million offer to finally participate in the NBA's dunk contest.

James told ESPN's Lisa Salters that, although he hasn't decided on a response to Johnson's offer, he frequently considers entering the dunk contest.

James had never taken part in the dunk contest in his 10-

year career despite consistently throwing down trophy-worthy slams in warm-ups and games. The three-time league MVP told Salters, however, that he has considered participating.

Johnson addressed the issue Friday on ESPN's "Kia NBA Countdown," claiming that he would pay \$1 million to James -- or anyone who

can beat him in the dunk contest.

James acknowledged being aware of the lucrative offer.

"Tell him I'll get back to him," James told Salters.

The NBA currently pays \$100,000 to the winner and \$50,000 to the runner-up. ESPN analyst Jalen Rose called for more elite players to take part, as well.

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Athletics: Golden Lavillenie rages as mighty leap ruled out



GOTHENBURG (AFP) - Olympic champion Renaud Lavillenie won a third European indoor polevault title on Sunday, but was furious that a mighty 6.07m attempt was

ruled out over a technical hitch.

The Frenchman took gold with 6.01m before successfully clearing 6.07m on his third and final attempt which would have made him the second highest vaulter in history behind the legendary Sergei

Bubka.

But officials ruled his attempt was invalid as the bar, which he had touched, stayed in place despite having bounced out of position.

A furious Lavillenie kicked out at the advertising hoardings and launched an angry tirade against the judges before collapsing to the floor.

After a tense few moments, the French athlete reluctantly accepted the decision and celebrated his victory, achieved ahead of German duo, Bjorn Otto, who recorded 5.76m, and Malte Mohr, 5.76m.

The men's 800m was won by defending champion Adam Kszczot of Poland in a time of 1:48.69, with silver going to Spain's Kevin Lopez (1:49.31) and the bronze to rising British star Mukhtar Mohammed in 1:49.60.

FC Barcelona Beaten, second time in five days



MADRID (AFP) - : Barcelona's goalkeeper Victor Valdes (2ndR) argues with referee Perez Lasa (R) at the end of the "El clasico" Spanish League football match Real Madrid vs Barcelona, referee Miguel Perez Lasa didn't award a penalty from what appeared to be a trip by Ramos on Adriano and keeper Victor Valdes was sent-off after the final whistle for his protestations. Real Madrid won 2-1. Barca still lead the table by 12 points and are 13 clear of Real.

Boxing: Cuba's Abril retains WBA title



Richard Abril (r) lands a punch to Sharif Bogere

LAS VEGAS, (AFP) - A bloodied Richard Abril scored a unanimous decision over Sharif Bogere to retain his World Boxing Association lightweight title on Saturday at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.

Cuba's Abril won on all three judges' scorecards (115-111, 116-110, 116-110) as he handed the Ugandan his first loss as a professional.

The 30-year-old Abril improved to 18-3 with one draw and eight knockouts, landing 35 percent of his total punches to just 15 percent landed for Uganda's Bogere.

Bogere had a point deducted in the 12th round for a headbutt, while Abril had a point taken away in the eighth round for holding.

Abril, who suffered a cut above his eye from a headbutt in round six, was making his first appearance in the ring since losing a split decision to unbeaten American Brandon Rios in April.

Bogere dropped to 23-1 with 15 knockouts.

Abril said he wants his next fight to be against WBC light-weight champion Adrien Broner.



ACAPULCO (AFP) : Rafael Nadal of Spain wears a traditional Mexican mariachi hat while holding the winning trophy after defeating his compatriot David Ferrer at the Mexico ATP Open men's single final in Acapulco, Guerrero state on March 2, 2013. Rafael Nadal beats David Ferrer 6-0, 6-2.

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Baseball: Champs Japan, Taiwan grab second WBC wins



Japan's Sho Nakata (R) makes a single against China



The Netherlands team

FUKUOKA (AFP) - Reigning champions Japan beat China and Taiwan came from behind against the Netherlands as the two co-hosts neared round two of the World Baseball Classic with their second straight wins on Sunday.

Japan were easy 5-2 winners against China in Fukuoka, while in Taichung, Taiwan recovered from 0-3 down to storm past the Netherlands 8-3. Both teams have now won their first two pool games with just one left to play.

Powerful Cuba, the 2006 finalists, also opened their Pool A campaign with a compre-

hensive 5-2 defeat of Brazil, who sunk to their second loss after being beaten by Japan on Saturday.

In Taichung, Yang Dai-kang fired a two-run homer to round off Taiwan's victory over the Netherlands, stacked with players from the Dutch Antilles, who shocked 2009 runners-up South Korea on Saturday.

Taiwan gave the Netherlands three straight walks in the second inning, and the Dutchmen eventually capitalized on another walk and a hit by outfielder Kallian Sams to lead 3-0.

But Chang Chien-ming hit a single between the third and shortstop to give Taiwan one run in the bottom of the same inning, and they made it 5-3 in the fourth inning with one hit, one walk with full bases and two sacrifice flies.

Taiwan consolidated the victory with catcher Lin Hung-yu hitting a double to make it 6-3, and Yang's home run for 8-3.

Cuba were quiet until Erisbel Arruebarrena earned their first hit to send Jose Fernandez to third base in the fifth inning, before scoring the first run on

Guillermo Heredia's grounder to shortstop, as Brazil missed a double play.

Outfielder Alexei Bell hit a single to the left field to make it 2-0. Pinch-hitter Raul Gonzalez made it 3-0 in the sixth inning and Arruebarrena added two more runs before Brazil managed to claw two back.

Brazilian fourth batter Daniel Matsumoto hit an infield single with the second and third bases occupied to pull one back before Reinaldo Sato welcomed a runner from the third base by hitting a grounder to the short stop.

In Sunday's later game, Kenta Maeda, starter for two-time defending champions Japan, shut out five innings and gave up only one single to become the winning pitcher.

"Our pitchers did their job really well today. We took a 1-0 lead and it was not enough. Then we took another four points. It was a very good game for us," said head coach Koji Yamamoto.

The top two teams in Pool A and Pool B will reach the second round in Tokyo, which will decide which two sides progress to the final games later this month in San Francisco.



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